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Russian nor French treaty provides for it; so that, unless there be great indiscretion on the part of nations who go to war easily, and by mere executive will, the prospect of a resumption of peaceful relations is very fair. The desolation of Canton should be a solemn warning.

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ART. IX. — PLUTARCH'S *Lives*. *The Translation called DRYDEN'S, corrected and revised by A. H. CLOUGH*, sometime Fellow and Tutor of Oriel College, Oxford, and late Professor of the English Language and Literature at University College, London. In five vols. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1859.

As there are many more persons capable of appreciating portraits than there are who can understand or enjoy landscape-painting, so are the pupils of biography much more numerous than those of history. And as for the writers and readers of professed history, are not the most popular works from their pens or in their hands virtually biographies? Lands and ages are described mainly by the memoirs of their representative men; and it is not events or institutions, but personages, that sustain interest in the narrative. Dramatic power is no less essential to the historian who shall win the suffrages of the multitude, than to the play-writer whose productions shall obtain an enduring fame in the theatre. Annals are consulted, not read. Constitutional histories are for the student only. Niebuhr and Hallam, the most philosophical historians of any age, are dull simply because their narratives are to so great a degree impersonal; while Macaulay's pages fascinate young and old, the illiterate and the cultured alike, because he makes each individual actor play his part and tell his story in the public eye and ear.

There is reason and right in this. Because it is so profoundly true, it is almost too trite to be repeated, that "the proper study of mankind is man." Consciousness is the recipient and interpreter of history; and consciousness identi-

fies or contrasts itself, not with external facts, nor with combined movements, nor with the phases of national life, but with the emotions and experiences of individuals. Every momentous incident, however multitudinous in its actors or its subjects, impersonates itself to our thought. It is Alexander that conquers the world. It is Napoleon Bonaparte that revolutionizes Europe, and Wellington that overthrows his empire. The subordinate agents, though they be kings or world-renowned generals, seem of little more significance than the prompters or scene-shifters on the stage. We never feel that we comprehend a passage in history, till we have individualized it, so as to stand face to face with its one master-mind. As the nucleus to crystallization, so is the central figure to the orderly arrangement of dates, achievements, and events in the imagination and the memory. Our clear knowledge of particular epochs is designated, when we give them the names of the men who chiefly illustrated, adorned, or controlled them; as when we speak of the age of Pericles, or Augustus, or Luther, or Elizabeth. The epochs which lack such personal names lie partly in shadow. Our chief difficulty in conceiving vividly of the history of our own times consists in the unfinished lives and the rival pretensions of its actors,—in the indeterminateness of the relative influence of minds constantly interacting upon one another in the development of passing events. Posterity alone can pronounce the names around which our annals will group themselves in well-understood history.

Conversely, biography is our most profitable study in history. The man who gives character to his age is shaped by it and by antecedent ages. His mental and moral pedigree reaches back farther than the books of heraldry which we consult for his parentage. He has taken up into his life-circulation currents that have been flowing for countless centuries. He is the exponent, in great part, the resultant, the product, of more generations than have elapsed since his native language began to be spoken. He represents, in his peculiar sphere, what collective humanity has been, done, and attained in that sphere. In knowledge he stands on an eminence formed by the accumulated deposits of buried nations. In his

moral culture he is enriched by the experiences of the whole past. His resources have been brought together from the experiments, discoveries, and inventions of all preceding time. A profoundly learned jurist undertook, some fifty years ago, to write the history of the United States, and in dying left several huge manuscript parts of the projected work, which it was found he had commenced in the garden of Eden, and was arrested by his last illness in a narrative of the discovery of America. The life of an individual, to be truly written, must, in like manner, begin with Adam, and epitomize all the intervening ages; not, indeed, in weary introductory volumes, or chapters, or even paragraphs, but in the biographer's clear conception at once of human nature itself, and of the elements brought together by centuries to modify human nature in his particular subject.

As to contemporary history, there is hardly need of the fashionable title, "Life and Times"; for the "Life" cannot be truly written without of necessity including the "Times." Government, religious creed or faction, international relations, art, literature, the collective standard of society, the current tone of thought and speech,—all leave their record in personal experience,—all are reflected from the mental states, the doings and endurings, the opinions and habits, of any and every man whose life is worth writing. The most strictly personal memoir presents a large section of local, national, and general history. No chronicles of contemporary or subsequent authorship will give remote posterity a view of society at the present epoch, which can be compared, in point of vividness and truth, with that which may be derived from a few assorted biographies of the men and women of our day. The recent memoir of Stephenson will transmit a knowledge of the wonderful revolutions wrought by the locomotive agency of steam, with its ramifications extending to every department of life, more accurate and thorough than will be conveyed in all the annals of our times that will be written. The life of Chalmers contains and suggests an amount of ecclesiastical history which, in a more general form, will not and cannot be compiled. Irving's *Life of Washington* embodies materials for a more comprehensive knowledge of the efficient causes, the

progress, the *animus* of the conflict in which our nation had birth, than can be drawn from all the numberless impersonal compends of the incidents and transactions of that eventful period.

In ethics also biography is the only effective teacher. The working power of an ethical system is its sole test, and the sole means of commending it to confidence and adoption. Xenophon did much more than Plato toward perpetuating the influence of Socrates on life and manners. The Socratic Dialogues are for the speculative student; the *Memorabilia* for the mass of mankind. The Sacred Scriptures are conformed in their whole structure to this same law. The historical books of the Old Testament are, for the most part, a series of biographical sketches; and their efficacy in the moral education of the ages is due almost wholly to their sharply drawn and vividly colored portraits of patriarchs, kings, and prophets, devout men and holy women, apostates, sinners, and miscreants. The New Testament closes the canon, and consummates the work of revelation, not by didactic essays, not by dogmatic exhibitions, but by incarnating all truth and all duty in a life Divine in its source, its powers, and its offices, human in its arena and its experiences.

The highest ethical value can attach itself to biography only under the Christian revelation, and with reference to its perfect and immutable standard of excellence. If astronomical observations of permanent and universal utility are sought, the position of the observatory must first be ascertained; and that position is determined, not alone by its longitude, measured on varying parallels and from an arbitrary meridian, but by its latitude, reckoned on great and equal circles from the unchanging equator. Extra-Christian biography can give us only the longitude of a character as computed by a standard which has no validity of its own. Christian biography, when true to its calling, gives us latitude also, — distance from the eternally fixed equator, measured on arcs of those great circles which pass through both poles of the spiritual universe, and intersect all departments and conditions of human life. From characters thus determined, observations may be safely taken for guidance in duty and for defence against evil. Thus written,

biography becomes availing for example, for warning, and for "instruction in righteousness."

Plutarch's *Lives*, on all the grounds we have specified, — even, paradoxical as the assertion may seem, on the last, — claim still, as they have held for ages, a place second to no formal series of biographies that has ever seen the light. Monographs, indeed, there have been, in which the author has thrown all his power and skill into the portraiture of one individual, and which stand out as equally worthy memorials of the genius of the limner, and the strong or beautiful traits reproduced under his touch ; but no instance is there in which, with grace and felicity equal to Plutarch's, the same hand has depicted so large a diversity of character, of unlike races, and of widely distant ages.

In their historical character, these "*Lives*" certainly, at first sight, seem defective, and often untrustworthy. There is an occasional neglect of the order of time, and a grouping of events according to laws of association in the author's own mind. He sometimes ascribes to one person words or deeds which traditionally belong to another. He read Latin but imperfectly, and in his Roman biographies there can be no doubt that he in some instances misinterpreted his authorities. He had spent but little time in Rome, and lacked minute conversance with the details of public affairs and of social life in the imperial city. But his few and rare mistakes are with relation to utterly unessential and insignificant particulars. He never misconceives a trait of character, or violates intrinsic probability, or departs from the analogy of admitted facts. This keen insight and just apprehension as to the inner life of his subjects imply and result from a clear historical vision, a distinct and adequate conception of the age and community to which his hero belongs. Hence his biography is history, inasmuch as no leading personage or strongly marked character can exist without embodying, or be portrayed without presenting, large, entire, and momentous chapters of history. The following paragraph, by George Long, one of Plutarch's translators and commentators, does no more than simple justice to his fidelity as a biographer.

“There must be some merit in a work which has entertained and instructed so many generations, which is read in so many languages, and by people of all conditions; a work which delighted Montaigne and Rousseau, for it was one of the few books which Rousseau had never read without profit; a work which amuses both young and old, the soldier and the statesman, the philosopher and the man who is busied about the ordinary affairs of life. The reason is, that Plutarch has rightly conceived the business of a biographer, — his biography is true portraiture. Other biography is often a dull, tedious enumeration of facts, in the order of time, with perhaps a summing up of character at the end. Such biography is portraiture also, but it is false portraiture; the dress and the accessories put the face out of countenance. The reflections of Plutarch are neither impertinent nor trifling: his sound good sense is always there; his honest purpose is transparent; his love of humanity warms the whole. His work is, and will remain, in spite of all the fault that can be found with it by plodding collectors of facts and small critics, the book of those who can nobly think, and dare and do. It is the book of all ages, for the same reason that good portraiture is the painting of all time; for the human face and the human character are ever the same. It is a mirror in which all men may look at themselves.”

Admirable as Plutarch's Lives are in their historical bearing, this is by no means their highest praise. It is perfectly evident that his primary purpose was the exhibition of conduct and character in their moral aspects, as worthy of approval and imitation, or amenable to censure. His discrimination is exquisitely keen. Fulsome praise and utter condemnation are equally alien from his genius and his plan. The foibles of his favorite heroes are portrayed with judicial impartiality. Crimes are related with their aggravating or palliating circumstances, while noble traits and generous acts are described with a fervor that betrays the warmth of his benevolent sympathies, and the elevation of his own principles and motives. Especially are his comparative views of his Greek and Roman subjects rich in ethical wisdom. Witness the following passage from his comparison of Theseus and Romulus: —

“Both Theseus and Romulus were by nature meant for governors; yet neither lived up to the true character of a king, but fell off and ran, the one into popularity, the other into tyranny, falling both into the same fault out of different passions. For a ruler's first end is to main-

tain his office, which is done no less by avoiding what is unfit than by observing what is suitable. Whoever is either too remiss or too strict, is no more a king or a governor, but either a demagogue or despot, and so he becomes either odious or contemptible to his subjects. Though certainly the one seems to be the fault of easiness and good-nature, the other of pride and severity.

“If men’s calamities, again, are not to be wholly imputed to fortune, but refer themselves to differences of character, who will acquit either Theseus of rash and unreasonable anger against his son, or Romulus against his brother? Looking at motives, we more easily excuse the anger which a stronger cause, like a severer blow, provoked. Romulus, having disagreed with his brother advisedly and deliberately on public matters, one would think could not on a sudden have been put into so great a passion; but love and jealousy, and the complaints of his wife, which few men can avoid being moved by, seduced Theseus to commit that outrage upon his son. And what is more, Romulus, in his anger, committed an action of unfortunate consequence; but that of Theseus ended only in words, some evil speaking, and an old man’s curse; the rest of the youth’s disasters seem to have proceeded from fortune; so that, so far, one would give his vote on Theseus’s part.” — Vol. I. pp. 79, 80.

This passage is certainly worthy of a Christian moralist; nor is there in the whole series of Plutarch’s Lives a single moral judgment which might not remain unchallenged if brought under review before the high tribunal of Christian ethics. Theodoret enumerates Plutarch among those heathen writers who had heard the Gospel, and transcribed many things from it into their books. His testimony is, indeed, too late to be received as proof of an authentic historical fact, and the Christian fathers were wont to make similar assertions of all philosophers and moralists whose *dicta* seemed to accord with the teachings of the New Testament. But the statement with regard to Plutarch is at least probable. Born at Chæronea in Bœotia, and residing there for the larger part of his lifetime, he was separated by no great distance from several communities of Christian converts in Greece. He studied at Athens at a period when St. Paul’s preaching on the Areopagus must have been fresh in the memory of many. He visited Egypt for the sole purpose of study, and can hardly have failed to resort to the famous school of Alexandria, which had



already essayed the union of the Christian theology with a modified Platonism. In his essay on Superstition he evinces a thorough and minute acquaintance with the ceremonial part of Judaism, and it is incredible that he should have remained ignorant of that offshoot from Judaism which was spreading its vigorous branches in every part of the Roman empire. His Dialogue on the Delay of the Divine Justice is so eminently Christian in its whole course of reasoning, and in its intense solemnity of thought and style, that there is not one of the Fathers of the Church whose reputation would not have been enhanced by its authorship; and even De Maistre, who has reconstructed it, expresses grave doubts whether his interpolations have rendered it more purely evangelical, — doubts which we are sure, with his judicious reader, will be decided in favor of the Pagan author, as more closely in accordance with the universal Christian belief and consciousness than his Roman Catholic editor. We can easily conceive, that, without the full presentation of the external evidences of Christianity which would lead to a conviction of its specifically divine and miraculous origin, Plutarch may have read the Gospels or other Christian writings, may have imbibed the spirit of their ethical teachings from the affinity of his own nature, and may have unconsciously adopted their standard for his judicial estimate of characters and deeds. However this may be, no Pagan writer before Christ gives evidence of a moral judgment so pure and true, of so profound a sense of the immutable right, and of so uniform a reference to it in the description of character and the narration of events and transactions.

The known facts of Plutarch's life are few. His family was of long standing and high reputation in his native city. He was probably born about the middle of the first century of the Christian era. His teacher at Athens was the philosopher Ammonius. At some period before A. D. 90 he was at Rome on public business, probably engaged in the prosecution of some claim or the advocacy of some petition in behalf of the municipality of which he was a citizen. He delivered, while at Rome, lectures which drew the public attention and interest, and travelled extensively in Italy. Suidas says that he was the tutor of the Emperor Trajan, and was invested by him with the

consular dignity; but there is no other evidence of the fact, which is doubted or denied by all competent critics. The only collateral proof cited in behalf of this statement is a Latin epistle from Plutarch to Trajan, which is undoubtedly a forgery, for there is reason to believe that Plutarch was not sufficiently skilled in the Latin tongue to have written it. Moreover, Plutarch, in dedicating his *Apophthegms* to Trajan, says nothing of any special relation that had subsisted between the Emperor and himself. Plutarch was for a considerable time Archon of Cheronæa, and for many years a priest of Apollo, most probably officiating in that capacity at Delphi. He lived to a good old age. The date of his death is unknown, but it cannot have been far from A. D. 120.

Plutarch was married, and had at least five children, of whom two sons are known to have survived till manhood. A letter addressed to his wife on the occasion of the death of a daughter, — it would seem an only daughter, — while he was absent from his family, presents him in the most amiable aspect as a husband and a father. We quote a portion of this letter, as given in the “*Life of Plutarch*,” in the first of the volumes now under review: —

“Plutarch to his wife, greeting: The messengers you sent to announce our child’s death apparently missed the road to Athens. I was told about my daughter on reaching Tanagra. Everything relating to the funeral I suppose to have been already performed; my desire is that all these arrangements may have been so made as will now, and in the future, be most consoling to yourself. If there is anything which you have wished to do, and have omitted, awaiting my opinion, and think would be a relief to you, it shall be attended to, apart from all excess and superstition, which no one would like less than yourself. Only, my wife, let me hope that you will maintain both me and yourself within the reasonable limits of grief. What our loss really amounts to, I know and estimate for myself. But should I find your distress excessive, my trouble on your account will be greater than on that of our loss. I am not a ‘stock or stone,’ as you, my partner in the care of our numerous children, every one of whom we have ourselves brought up at home, can testify. And this child, a daughter, born to your wishes after four sons, and affording me the opportunity of recording your name, I am well aware was a special object of affection.” — Vol. I. pp. xi, xii.

This epistle closes with expressions of confident belief in immortality, — not in re-absorption into the soul of the universe, but in the continuance after death of individual, self-conscious life. If the writer had, either by books or through the living voice, become conversant with Christian dogmas, it is easy to account for this intelligent faith, in the simple form in which he enunciates it, as contradistinguished from those modes of statement, so prevalent in extra-Christian philosophy both ancient and modern, in which immortality is a mere euphemism for annihilation.

In harmony with the spirit of this extract are all Plutarch's references to his kindred. He speaks with veneration of his father, makes his grandfather take an honored part in his Dialogues, and in his essay on "Affection between Brothers" he says: "For myself, that among the many favors for which I have to thank the kindness of fortune, my brother Timon's affection to me is one, past and present, that may be put in the balance against all the rest, is what every one that has so much as met with us must be aware of, and our friends of course know well." He seems also, as a neighbor, citizen, and office-bearer, to have been signally mindful of those lesser duties and services which make up the daily task-work of a useful life, and which are the surest index of character. It is thus perfectly evident that the moral standard which he applied to remote and historical personages was none other than that habitually present to his consciousness, and supreme over his whole life. We cannot but think of him as an eminently virtuous man, not only for his times, but for any land or age.

As regards his intellectual adaptations, he seems to have been pre-eminently fitted for the description of literary labor which has given him his chief fame. Speculative philosophy was not within his province. He saw truth, not in its abstract formulæ, but as incarnated and verified in actual life. The best of his ethical works present principles in the concrete, and abound in supposed cases or illustrative examples, which he sometimes selects and arranges with exquisite skill, so as to make them consecutive links of a close chain of reasoning. The power of the "Delay of the Divine Justice" consists mainly in the appositeness and impressiveness with which the question is first opened, and then answered in detail, by a

series of conspicuous instances in which retribution, because delayed, had been none the less sure, and only the more fearful and weighty. Where he departs from this method, his writings possess a much diminished value. A mind thus constituted, and a taste thus formed, could not but have found their most congenial work and won their highest fame in the department of pure biography.

We must confess a very restricted acquaintance with Plutarch's Greek style, one of his ethical treatises and a few excerpts from his "Lives" being all that we have read in the original. We are able, from this limited reading, to express our entire concurrence with the statement of one of his most erudite critics, that "his style is somewhat difficult to those who are not accustomed to it." His sentences lack simplicity, symmetry, and directness. He is prone to redundancy of verbiage, and this seemingly on two grounds,—from a natural proclivity to rhetorical ornament, and from his exceeding earnestness to be thoroughly understood by his reader. His manner was also, no doubt, injuriously affected by the current Greek literature of his day, which lacked both the chasteness and the vigor of earlier times.

The great work which is specially designated as Plutarch's Lives consists of forty-six memoirs arranged in pairs, a Greek and a Roman together. The lives of each pair are generally followed by a comparison of their characters. In five instances this comparison is wanting; and, as there is no apparent reason for the omission, it seems much more probable that these *lacunæ* mark lost portions of the original work, than that they were left unfilled by the author. The Lives of Aratus, Artaxerxes, Mnemon, Galba, and Otho are ordinarily printed with the forty-six, but seem to have been independent compositions. Several memoirs, known to have been written by Plutarch,—some of them perhaps included in the compilation under review,—are lost beyond recovery. There is extant a Life of Homer bearing Plutarch's name; but its genuineness as his work is subject to grave question. Aulus Gellius quotes it as Plutarch's; but the very quotations that he makes would seem to designate the hand of a hair-splitting grammarian and logician, rather than of a liberal and high minded biographer.

The "Lives" have been often translated. Amyot's French version, which appeared in 1559, was the basis of Sir Thomas North's English translation, which was published in 1612, and which, though by no means to be commended for its accuracy, and of course the more liable to error from its double transference, has been justly admired for its beauty of style. The English version of John and William Langhorne has been often reprinted, and is to be found in many libraries in this country. The "Translation called Dryden's" — the basis of the edition now before us — is Dryden's only in its title. It is the work of many hands, the great poet having only lent it the sanction of his name, and written the Dedication to the Duke of Ormond, and the Life of Plutarch prefixed to it.

We take great pleasure in commending the edition just issued by the Boston firm, to whose liberal taste and munificent enterprise the American public are so largely indebted. Mr. Clough is well known as a thorough classical scholar, and a painstaking editor. Of the extent of his labors in revision we have not the means of forming an estimate, as we have at hand only the version of the Langhorne with which to make the comparison. But this comparison is very strongly in favor of Clough's Dryden, both on the score of fluency and idiomatic freshness of style, and of manifest fidelity to the turns of expression and the minute shades of thought in the original Greek. This new edition is characterized in its mechanical execution by substantial elegance. Each volume has an appendix, containing the names of the translators of the several lives contained in it, with supplementary notes, in addition to the foot-notes found in connection with the text. To the fifth volume are appended a copious alphabetical index, and a key to the pronunciation of proper names.

We trust that the appearance of this edition will revive an interest — perhaps on the wane with the present generation — in a series of memoirs by far the most noteworthy in the literature of either ancient or modern times. No youth should deem himself liberally educated who is not familiar with Plutarch. As an adept in the concrete philosophy of human nature, he can never be dethroned from his eminence among the great moral teachers of our race. His "Lives" have also

an independent value, as making his readers incidentally acquainted with a very large amount of ancient literature. He quotes not far from two hundred and fifty writers, about one third of whom are known only or chiefly by citations in the works of other authors. His labors, extending from the mythical age of Greece and the more than semi-mythical era of the foundation of Rome down to his own generation, furnish collectively a large and almost a connected compend of Greek and Roman history, every leading epoch being brought into the clearest light in the person of its prominent actors.

It would be well if Plutarch were taken, not only as a teacher in history and in morals, but as an example for modern biographers. He had the just sense of proportion, and the regard for the limited receptivity of readers, which are almost wholly wanting in the biographical literature of our own day. His "Lives" are all of a commendable brevity, and confine themselves to the salient traits, the characteristic acts, and the public relations of his heroes. His reticence was indeed necessary with regard to his earlier subjects; but as to the later, he had access to materials that might have quadrupled or increased tenfold the bulk of his labors upon them. He might, by crowding his pages with the paltry gossip of times near his own, have gratified the prurient curiosity of his contemporaries; but this would have so loaded down his work with matter of ephemeral interest, that it would have passed into early neglect, and might have been submerged beneath the rickety arches of the frail bridge on which but a small portion of ancient literature crossed the Dark Ages to reappear with the revival of learning. The great men of our own generation are, many of them, sure to be thrust into oblivion by the very means employed to perpetuate their memory. These memoirs of several massive volumes; these prolix chapters, devoted to the details of pedigree, the pranks and follies and whippings of childhood, the minutiae of courtship and of housekeeping; these masses of trivial correspondence; these sweepings of desks and commonplace-books,—owe their brief importance, not to any healthy or permanent interest, but to a kind of curiosity which is rife only while a distinguished name is fresh on the lips and memory of the public. In the

climax of regret and reverence which ensues upon the death of a distinguished personage, everything that appertained to him is eagerly read by his friends and admirers, — by those who shared his opinions, seconded his measures, or were proud of his fame. But the next generation will have its own cluster of favorites, its own budget of honored memories, and will not afford time or thought for the lengthened memoirs of those whom it never knew in life, and whose places are already more than filled by new claimants for their regard. We are in intense need of Plutarchs for our own dead, if we would have their names held in enduring reverence among those who shall succeed us. It would be a matter of not unworthy inquiry, how large a proportion of biographical volumes remain uncut on the shelves of private and public libraries. Our own observation assures us that the purchasers of such books far outnumber the readers.

A definition logically consists of the generic character and the specific difference. In biography the former may for the most part be left to inference; it is with the latter only that readers are concerned, — it is the latter only that posterity will wish to know. That which constitutes the *e-minence* of the person whose life is written, — that wherein he towered *toto capite* above his contemporaries, — that which constituted the *specific* grounds for his success or his reputation, — is the prime material for a memoir. Every man who achieves distinction holds an official place with reference to his own and succeeding generations; and the public are concerned to know what that place was, and how he filled it. Every good man is, in certain aspects, an example for those around him and for those who come after him; and the interests of virtue demand that those aspects shall be clearly represented by his biographer, and not obscured by a mass of utterly irrelevant and perplexing detail. Every prominent actor in the important affairs of church, state, or society subtends in his life a certain arc of an historical cycle, — constitutes in part, in chief, or in whole a portion of the history of his times; and posterity need access to the history which he created, which he was, and are wronged and defrauded if that history be made illegible by interpolations which never had the slightest sig-

nificance beyond a restricted clique of kindred and intimates. These prolix biographies, it is often said, are accumulating materials for the future historian ; but they are rather rendering the labors of that mythical personage impossible, unless he shall be a Hercules in his working force, and a Methuselah in the years allotted for his life-task.

There are also considerations of delicacy to which a biographer should not be insensible. There are portions of every man's life which he would shrink from laying open to public inspection. Why should death remove the seal with which in life the most obtrusive inquisitiveness would not dare to tamper ? There are almost always kindred and friends whose sensibilities are lacerated by such exposure. No man would willingly live in a house of glass. Why should the walls of a great man's dwelling be made transparent as soon as he is translated from it ? The portions of the life that are by the common instinct kept from day to day sacred from the public gaze, should remain inviolate. Confidential interviews, communications designed for no third person, should be promulgated only under the demand of some great public necessity. Foibles that were veiled from open view should be doubly veiled when they can no longer give annoyance or excite resentment. Private correspondence, often carelessly worded, interspersed with familiar badinage, betraying transient states of feeling which would not have been committed to writing except for the most friendly eye, is the property of the writer, and is stolen and thrown out to the world only by a dishonesty like that which would rifle a dead man's purse or wardrobe. Papers for personal use, memoranda, unfinished writings, — such materials as, in their owner's keeping, would never have seen the light, or not without extensive revision and modification, — are in no just sense public property after the owner's death ; and it is sacrilege to his fair fame to commit them to the press. Sins of this class deface the greater portion of recent biographical literature, and play a traitor's part with the well-earned reputation of their subjects. It is high time for our critical journals to take severe cognizance of such outrages, and to vindicate for the dead the rights which are no less theirs because they can no longer guard their sanctity or avenge their violation.